

Fourth Interview

Q: Colonel Badger, last summer you identified the District's future as tied to the Red River Study and GREAT I. Now, how much control does the District have over its own future?

A: Well, when I first took over the job, I thought we had quite a bit, but as we developed both the GREAT I Implementation Study and the Red River Strategy Report, we faced the problem of having to get both of those reports through the system.

The GREAT study was endorsed by the Division and went before the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors and is pretty well intact. It lays out what we would like to do in the St. Paul District on the Mississippi River for the next 20 years. I think that the GREAT document represents half of the master plan to where we are going.

The Red River Strategy Report is a little different in that the Division hasn't bought off on it. It contains some innovative approaches and we are coordinating with the Division now.

Obviously, Division is improving our approach in some ways, but we may be getting away from the original conception of the District,

local, and state people. I am hoping that what the local people see after we have done our modifications is not something that makes them unhappy because it appears to be diluted.

But I have been working during all of my three years on those reports and still they are moving slowly. Basically I wanted strategy reports covering both of my large river basins which would set further directions for the St. Paul District.

Q: What about the DE, of course, who comes and goes. The District stays. Given the length of your tour of duty, what kind of imprint do you leave on a District?

A: Well, in the military sense of assignments, three years is a long time. I thought that I could do those things that I wanted in three years.

But you have external influences, such as the reorganization where we lost the Lake Superior part of our area, and a major reorganization where we went to an independent Planning Division. Space and money cuts and other external requirements make heavy demands on your time. Just running the organization and handling the external forces subtracts from the efforts to leave the desired imprint.

I have accomplished most of my personal objectives with the exception of that computer area.

I felt that a fourth year would have been good. General Smith asked me to stay a fourth year. It went all the way to General Bratton in a District Engineer slating session, and the Chief of Engineers faced a decision that could have been precedent-setting: to have a four-year DE.

There are many prominent reasons why it would be good to have a four-year DE, and the obvious reason is for continuity. But the greatest disadvantage is that the management and leadership skills you develop as a DE are skills the Army needs in other key jobs. But the decision was made not to set the precedent on a four-year DE, so I will serve my three years and move on to a new job.

Q: You wanted to stay a fourth year?

A: I said yes when asked. The reason I said yes was that I wanted to do more work with the District. I wanted to get my projects farther through the system. I thought I could contribute more and, personally, I didn't think the Army had another job for me that had the pleasure, the scope, and the significance of being DE. I think I was wrong. The job I'm going to, Director of Engineering and Housing at the Military Academy, appears to be just as challenging.

Q: I remember when you started at St. Paul, you were talking about learning and then establishing -- doing things you wanted to do in the second year (I forget the words you used) and then institutionalizing what you had done in the third year. You were confident that you could go from one of those stages to the other. How has it been?

A: Well, I think the third year has been a time of institutionalizing. We completed the study on the Planning Division and we reorganized effective 4 April 1982. The concept of having a full Planning Division within a District that did not have one before has taken root and is accepted.

We are giving the planning function more visibility now than it's had before. We have streamlined the Engineering Division and I feel that we are working better under the project manager system than we did before.

The new organizations will be in place in April and by the time I leave in June we will have them debugged and working.

Q: You wrote to Colonel Art Williams last fall that long-range planning is one of the niceties the District won't get unless it is demanded by the DE.

But I'm wondering, you know, how much long-range planning you are able to do given all these things that do affect your own system, plus the political context in which we work . . . ?

A: Well, we still haven't done well with the 20-year plan. However, we are going to brief the Division Engineer in April, during the command inspection, on our long-range plan.

What we've done is put the projects that we know about in a time scale envelope and projected how much money would be required each year to develop those projects. Then we totaled the envelopes to see if we had an average budget in the out-years that would support the people. Under the resources analysis table, the RAT, you take the money coming in and you justify your spaces and manpower distribution.

Obviously, you have to have a level workload and obviously a long time to get projects through the system -- planned, engineered, and built -- you are talking in the 20-year time frame.

So we are trying to analyze the 20-year period and attempt to determine what truisms there are, what rules of thumb. It is obvious to me that if I don't reach the four-to-five million dollar level of General Investigation funding, then I cannot support the planning effort, and I will not have projects in the pipeline that will keep the District healthy in the future.

This may sound like survivalism, and in a way it is. I look at the District as a national asset, especially during a time of mobilization. If the District isn't healthy, then it is not going to be effective in a mobilization.

If we can keep the civil works program performing flood control for the people, and by doing that, we receive monies that keep us trained as an organization, then we will be a national asset that is ready if we have to mobilize and support our armed forces.

Q: When the administration changed in 1981, did the framework of your planning change? Or has it changed since? Have your options been changed or reduced or expanded?

A: Well, when you change from one administration to another, the new administration seems obliged to make a change, distinguish itself from the last administration. So regardless, there is always a change. Change always creates delays and it usually slows down the process.

I see a real marked streak of conservatism in our new policies. People within the system are more concerned about the DEs speaking out. We have been cautioned more and more to discipline our comments. We have been cautioned more and more to play as a team.

Q: By whom?

A: By the system. I think that, traditionally, people feel that the Reagan administration is in our chain of command, that we as good soldiers have to support it, that we are speaking the administration's position more often and more forcefully than ever before. And I think that the Corps system has aligned itself to be supportive of the new administration, and I find that throughout the system there is conservatism.

Q: But did your options change much? I mean, your operational options?

A: Well, yes. Because when you have more discipline, you have less freedom, you have less innovation, you have less ability to do your thing. A conservative approach makes people more inclined to go to higher headquarters.

So decision making shifts from the lower levels up the chain of command. There is more centralism. There are more people in higher places who want to control what is going on.

Probably this is realistic inasmuch as there is less money and there are fewer spaces, and commanders feel every decision that affects money and spaces has to be made at the highest level.

But there is a definite shift in my three years from a decentralized operation toward a more centralized operation.

Q: That is very significant for the Corps of Engineers, which has been accustomed to operating on a more decentralized basis.

A: Obviously. I believe the decentralized mode is best, but I can't control the shift and the people who run the Corps can't control it either. I guess my intuitive feeling is that what made the Corps great was a decentralized organization with all the capability at the District level and many of the decisions made at that level. I am not as positive in my own mind that we are going to be as effective if we continue to shift to a centralized decision-making mode and fewer and fewer of the decisions are made by the District Engineer.

Q: Is there a certain paradox involved in the increasing centralization of decisions in order to increasingly decentralize government?

A: I think that the administration wants to be sure that we are speaking with a common tongue and that when they say decentralization, they want to be sure that the central issues and the central policies are those of the new administration.

I think that people are trying to transfer things back at the state level, but effectively within the course of work. I don't see the shift of the federalism that people talk about back to the states.

I still see a centralized position throughout the Corps of Engineers.

Q: Were you caught by surprise or were you surprised by the magnitude of the change from one administration to the other?

A: I didn't think the changes would be so drastic. I didn't think they would happen so quickly. The essence of the new policy arrived very quickly and the comments about what we could say and could not say about cost sharing were very exact. The comments about the District Engineers being more disciplined in what they say were very graphic.

Q: From Mr. Gianelli's office?

A: I would think from the President to Mr. Gianelli through the Corps. And I guess there was a credibility among us at the bottom that what was being said was true and that we had to toe the line quickly. Maybe this is the strength of the Corps' system, that you have the military in charge and when policies do change they change quickly and we listen well. Because usually you would expect that in a large organization it would take months and years to get policy from top to bottom.

Q: Yes. When you told me last summer that much of what needs to be changed in the planning procedure was not in your province to affect, what did you have in mind?

A: Well, General Heiberg did his study at the OCE civil works level and made a list of ways he was going to revitalize the planning

process. The only part of that list at my level was to reorganize into a Planning Division, which I am doing next week. The other part was that my Division Engineer said that he wanted me to be the District's chief planner, so he is saying that the District Engineer should be more directly involved in the planning process. Let your deputies run the day-to-day business of money, spaces, and personnel.

I have done this. My people have reacted a little bit because they see me spending more time in planning and engineering. They feel that maybe I'm not as concerned about the other functional areas that have been delegated to the deputy, so they feel that I am not as open to them and that I'm not communicating downward as well as I used to. But when the General directs you to become more involved, then you become more involved.

I moved the Chief of the Planning Division next door to me on the right, and I have the Chief of the Engineering Division on the left, and I am very closely involved with both. I am playing a much larger role, much more of my time is spent in planning than ever before.

Q: What kind of hopes do you have for this Planning Division?

A: I think that it will go well from the viewpoint that every part of it has been scrutinized in the reorganization, so probably once it's

formed it will be healthy, it will be streamlined, it will be understood by our own people.

The problem I see is if you cannot maintain the General Investigation funding to support it, the Planning Division will shrink and that's going to hurt us more than anything else. I would say the greatest thing that anyone could do for me to improve planning is to give me a benchmark level of GI funding. If I am sure I can keep the GI funding going, well, then I can get a consistent level of effort in the Planning Division, and then year in and year out we can more consistently pump out well planned projects. The key is to keep the GI funds flowing so that the Planning Division can afford to work.

Q: And that's something we are really not certain about, can't be certain about now.

A: Well, it seems like every year there is more and more GI funding cut out and that's the life blood. And as GI funding goes for planning, so goes the future of civil works. Because if the new projects are not coming out of the pipeline, then the organization will continue in a declining mode, losing spaces, dollars, people, and capability.

Q: You have expressed some frustration regarding trying to move projects through the system. How have things been this year?

A: Well, with the conservative approach on getting things done, going to the congressman or to the senator and speaking your mind has almost ceased. Now we work fully within the system. So the system is more responsive at the management levels to getting projects through, but it is still ineffective and inefficient in the technical channels.

I feel that if you have a project and you keep it in the management channels, it moves. But once the technocrats get a hold of it, it slows down. This hasn't changed.

Q: That's the same.

A: Yes, after three years I guess I feel that the technocrats probably won't change and my greatest fear is that they will sink us with good intentions, never knowing that they are our problem.

Q: That's here in this building?

A: Yes. And I have a feeling that no matter who is in management, we leave the technocrats to do the revisions, the reviews, and the policy setting. They won't police themselves. None of the efforts to improve the planning process I've seen have reached down to the technocrat level.

Now, I understand that the Chief of Engineering Division in civil works has an engineer excellence group looking at this problem.

But I did not realize, when I took over, the significance of the internal reviews and what that does moneywise, manpowerwise, and project timewise, to my projects. It is very frustrating for a District Engineer to live with milestones, push projects hard, and then once they clear the District and clear the Division, find that there is not someone pushing as hard in the Office of the Chief of Engineers. A District Engineer can push it, but it is very difficult to motivate people in Washington from St. Paul.

So I guess my greatest frustration is with the technical reviews, the redundancies within the system, and with the parochial points of view, which are well-meaning, but each one of them delays the project. They delay by sending it back and you keep changing and updating.

So it's a constant review and reiteration when the crucial thing about the project, once you have it at a C+ level, is getting it through the system. We worry too much about getting it at A+ level and then it gets so old it doesn't get through the system. I'd like to see more attention on getting projects through the system and less on raising project quality from the C+ to the A+.

Q: So, if you were talking to an incoming District Engineer about where the obstacles were to move projects, you would say they were in our system and in the technical review of our system.

A: Yes. I initially thought the problem was all the agencies I had to deal with outside the Corps. I thought that was 80 percent of the problem. I guess after three years I would have to turn that around and say I think it's 80 percent us. I have a feeling that our biggest problem is ourselves and I hope people in the hierarchy recognize this and are working like mad to change the system.

I see evidence that we have improved. We sent a policy letter up on our Burlington project four years ago and the answer was never received. General Harris, the previous Division Engineer, wasn't able to get an answer. We sent a letter from General Smith, the new Division Engineer, on Burlington -- now renamed Lake Darling -- and we got an answer in four months. But I think we should be striving for three to four weeks turnaround on policy letters and we are not getting it.

Q: Do you talk to other DEs who have the same kinds of problems?

A: Well, one of the peculiarities of the system is I don't see many other DEs outside this Division.

Q: I was going to ask you that.

A: And I don't get a chance for cross fertilization. We had a planning conference and we had all the DEs together and that was quite good. But the mechanism for exchanging lessons learned and good

ideas doesn't seem to be there, and so we each work at trying to get our work done individually and we are each left to our own devices. We do get together with other DEs within the Division, which is helpful. General Smith has worked hard to get good ideas exchanged between Districts within the Division.

I think that spending more time with other District Engineers and exchanging success stories might help all of us have more successes. But there is a lot of cost and wasted motion in getting all the District Engineers together.

Q: I remember once you suggested that the Engineer IG teams could be a good vehicle for transmitting innovation from District to District. How has that worked out?

A: Yes. Well, General Smith sent my recommendation to the Engineer IG. Basically, I recommended that the IG collect ideas from Districts inspected and present a "good ideas" briefing to other Districts. I think that the IG borrowed some of the tone and nuances from that recommendation, although he may have watered it down a bit.

But I believe the proof of the pudding will be when the IG team comes around to St. Paul next year, whether he is, in fact, exchanging good ideas from one District to the next District.

I spoke informally to the Engineer IG one day and recommended that we detail the Deputy District Engineer one week a year with the IG team inspecting another District. The advantage is that then he could relate how he is doing things in his District. And he could bring back the good things he saw from that inspection.

So, by giving up your Deputy one week a year, you could have cross fertilization among Districts. The IG seemed to like that idea. I'm not sure if that will ever be incorporated, but we have to continue to work on cross fertilization.

Q: Are you satisfied with what you have done to try to move projects through?

A: No, I don't think I am satisfied.

I feel that we have been effective enough to keep my District healthy. There is much more work. There are many good projects in the St. Paul District that we could have in the system and we could have under way.

However, there is a built-in cap though and that's the manpower you have and the money you get, and the systems are not going to let you grow in size, even though the work is there.

They are going to let you work at a constant level or a shrinking level, and many projects out there that need to be done are put on hold.

A lot of times when we see that it takes a long time to get a project through, part of the fault is that you are out selecting simple and easily put together projects. So we have a normal sorting system, based on our capabilities, resources, and manpower. My concern is that some good projects are piecemealed and only parts of the projects will be completed. I don't like patchwork solutions.

Q: You want to talk politics a little?

A: If I have to.

Q: This is not that kind of environment.

But I wonder if you would -- well, you already have, actually, to an extent -- compare the Carter and Reagan administrations for me relative to how they affected your operations?

A: Well, I think the politics now is in the cost-sharing and money. We are in an era where economics is the driving force. You find the District Engineer in a position of talking about three levels of cost sharing. The first, applied to many old projects, was used for

years and basically endorsed by Congress. We call them the old ABC's of cost-sharing.

Then you find yourself talking about the Carter administration's cost-sharing, which was a 75-25 percent split, the 25 percent being local and state combined.

Then you find yourself talking about the new Reagan cost-sharing and the new cost-sharing is tentatively in the 70-30 range, but really hasn't been defined well. District Engineers have been cautioned not to be too aggressive in discussing the current cost-sharing. That's being discussed basically by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works office and staff.

So you go out to people and you talk projects and you try to explain the setting of three types of cost-sharing and you are very cautious that you are being supportive of the new administration's cost-sharing plan, which is not yet totally formulated.

Obviously, cost-sharing is mandated in the legislative language when the project is approved. But we are not having projects approved by any new Water Resources bills.

When you talk in the political sense, I think that probably the thing that is most sensitive is cost-sharing. Along with cost-

sharing, the other thing that is sensitive is stating capability on projects. The administration is very concerned about capability, because they don't want separate compartmentalized capabilities quoted that haven't been formulated by the total organization.

When you have a budget that is approved by the administration, each project will be tagged with a stated capability. You have to be very careful not to make statements to a congressman saying, "Oh, we have a capability twice that much or three times that much," then have that congressman go through the back door and force more money into that project.

When we support that budget, we support the stated capability. Now, that stated capability is controlled at a higher level than ever before, so you have to be very careful in stating capabilities.

I have told my project managers that any time they are asked for capabilities, they say, "Please ask in writing," and we very carefully staff the capability because we want to be supportive of the administration.

Q: Are there significant differences between how Mr. Blumenfeld operated and how Mr. Gianelli operates?

A: Well, it's hard for me, from the St. Paul hinterland, to evaluate the management of new people. It is obvious that Mr. Gianelli had

much greater background and experience in water resources. It is obvious that he is better connected politically with the administration and it is obvious that he is a very strong, forceful man who knows what he is doing.

I think probably, as a manager engineer, we've got a more powerful, strong manager than we ever had.

I think the things he is doing really show that he's very capable. I believe that he's probably had a greater influence on the system and District Engineers than any other Assistant Secretary of Army-Civil Works.

But that's just an impression. I'm a long way from the flag pole.

Q: Well, I understood that when I asked the question. But you know, I'm curious about the impact it has on you out here.

During the flood season President Reagan went to Indiana and made a fuss over volunteers filling sandbags. Did this become a major topic of discussion in your office?

A: No, it didn't. I don't think I ever heard anyone mention the President being there. It had no real impact. I guess any time the President stops by an emergency or civil works project, the Corps

should feel it has received some visibility. But it was not discussed and it was just business as usual.

Q: This was a strange kind of visibility and it got some notice here, because it wasn't the Corps of Engineers or FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) that he had gone out there to praise. It was neighbors filling sandbags and it disturbed some people, you know, in this office.

A: Well, I think President Reagan obviously feels his strength is with the people and I am not surprised that he would take that approach. I believe the District Engineer and the Division Engineer received a lot of publicity about the good work that we did in Indiana, and major floods highlight the need for additional well-planned, well-engineered water resource management projects. So when you have a flood that gets national attention, that really highlights the need for an agency like the Corps to do the long-range planning.

Q: We talked a lot about management in our previous discussions and I want to try to catch up on a few issues.

What have been your greatest challenges and problems since the last time we talked?

A: We spend more time and more effort on the budget and the data for the budget than ever before. We were five months in getting the 1982 budget. We were operating by rule of thumb at the same rate as last year, but really we didn't know what our budget was going to be until five-twelfths of the year were out. Parts of the budget were cut almost on a weekly basis, and this has been true of the 1983 budget. We constantly have changes and turmoil with the budget, and this causes a great deal of pressure on the organization.

The project managers are frustrated because they spend so much time on writing up budget estimates and justifications. The branch and division chiefs are frustrated because they always have to cut, add or subtract budget amounts

Q: A constant state of flux.

A: It created a difficult management situation.

Finally the 1982 budget was approved and we had our allocations. As soon as that came in, the personnel space procedure changed. Before, I had a personnel space ceiling for full-time permanent appointments. At the end of the year I had to get under that number. It did not matter how much overhire we had during the year. I had a glide path that I could stay on by attrition to handle the space cut and overhire. No problem.

Well, five-twelfths into the year they changed the system. Now we use a full-time equivalency system, an accumulative procedure of man-years effort. Since I've been overhired most of the years, I'm going to go over in man-years effort. I've got the money to pay the people and I've got the work to be done, but now we've got this full-time equivalency problem to handle.

Every year there are different restrictions from a management point of view, and one year you will get your system organized, and the next year you have a continually changing system of management. My first year I had a space problem, but no money problems. Next year I had money problems, but no space problems. This year, I'm having both.

And so these are the kinds of ills of a declining organization that has continued management problems. Hopefully, the next iteration of cuts will be done at some other level in the Corps and maybe we can leave our organization alone for a year and get some stability.

Q: There are other areas . . . ?

A: Another challenge was to continue the institutionalizing of management innovations because I wanted to clean things up for the new District Engineer.

I developed a program of bringing the new District Engineer on board -- providing him with the history, copies of state books, and letters on what we were doing within the District; taking him to see the congressmen and senators; taking him to International Joint Board meetings; and having him visit the District for several days where I introduced him to all the governors, all the key federal agencies, and the people within the District.

The last few months, I have been focusing on an orderly transition. But if you ask me about other challenges, I have one problem that I haven't solved and it's a big one. It's computers. We can talk about that now or later.

Q: Now is good if it's all right.

A: Well, for three years I have been working to improve office automation, word processing, and the computer operation. We had an old piece of hardware and it took me the first year to get rid of it and to lease a new minicomputer -- Harris 500.

Then I spent the next year trying to get the software up on it. This last year, I found that we are just not managing computers well. I don't know if it was the computer technology, the engineer, or the District, but the computers cost more, gave us less of the data that we wanted, and were less supportive of me than I ever

thought possible. I am going away with a gnawing feeling that I was not solving the problem

We depend so much on the computer, we've got it doing so many things for us, but it's not fine-tuned and we are not properly managing this great capability. I don't really see great talent in the Corps in the computer management area and I feel bad about saying this. We have a lot of technicians who run computers, but it doesn't appear that we have a lot of managers managing the computer system.

I have a feeling that one of my goals of being able to provide the St. Paul District with the best computer support in the Army will not be met. Now, it's improved, but we are not there. And I have the feeling that it will take the new DE another two years to get there.

Q: How did you come to this realization?

A: Well, when people talk to you, they always surface one item that they are most frustrated with. The one item that continually showed up has been computer support.

We have a system where project managers charge obligations and expenditures to their projects. There is always a lagtime. The computer doesn't have the latest charges, or there are mischarges. Or we get extremely high overhead charges. Or you use a computer

and you think you are getting a \$1,500 job and it comes back \$20,000.

We have gone to an extensive program now of trying to get cost estimates so that people who want to use a computer will know how much they are going to be charged to use that computer. Now they can make a management decision whether or not using the computer is cost-effective.

This has been a significant problem in my District and I have some good people working on solving it, but we haven't solved it yet. I have a sneaking suspicion that there are a lot of people in the Corps who are having computer management problems because the problems appear inherent in the system.

Q: You can't establish a sophisticated system to take care of all your perceived needs in a short period of time. Maybe you haven't waited long enough.

A: Well, when I visited someone within Military Programs of OCE three years ago, they had two management information systems and neither of them was humming well. Of course, the promise was, "Well, the next generation is going to be better."

But still you visit places that get a lot of mileage out of computers. I recently visited West Point's admissions office and they have a computer application for all the people trying to get into West Point. They say they couldn't do their jobs without it and they seem to get excellent day-to-day support from it.

With my computer operation, certain applications are very supportive, others just do not seem to get there. My deputy is taking almost one-third of his time to manage the computer and office automation. We have gone to word processor clusters for the District and they are working well.

We have installed smart terminals at each lock and dam to compile shipping information. We have probably 70 terminals within the District so a lot of people get into the computer.

I think the weak area, though, is the management of the funding and the management of the computer use. We haven't got a handle on that. We are working hard on it. We are going to go out Army-wide and try to hire a "manager" first and a computer-knowledgeable person second.

Q: There's been a lot of snow this winter. And I guess it isn't melting yet, is it?

A: We set the all-time accumulative snow record for Minnesota of 95 inches. We received 36 inches of snow in one week. We had a very fortunate thawing in early March. Then we had a number of freeze-thaw cycles and most the snow now is gone without flooding.

Q: So there is no flood problem?

A: Well, the flood potential in mid-January was great. If it had kept snowing and we had a cold winter up until April and then a quick thaw, we would have faced probable flooding. But March has been good to us. We haven't had much additional snow and the thaw cycles have been ideal.

It looks like, if I had to give a forecast, that we could finish my tour without a major flood. In the Red River, we were having floods 9 out of 14 years, so the percentages were against me going 3 years without a major flood.

I was expecting a major flood, and we had a flood emergency exercise CPX where we had 80 people from the states and from my office and we practiced with the data used in the 1979 "flood of the century."

But it looks like, even though we are ready and capable of going out and doing a superb job of fighting the floods, that we are not going to have the chance to demonstrate how well we could have done.

Q: Which is all right.

A: Oh, yes. Obviously, the best of all worlds is to be well-trained and ready to take care of the problem and not have to take care of it.

Q: When did you have that exercise?

A: We had it in January and we had people from the Division and other Districts, the states, all my area engineers, and my military. We practiced laying sandbags. We practiced with the Crisafulli pumps. We had briefings. We ran our operations centers. We used our communications. We brought in the state people we were going to deal with in emergencies. Everybody got to know each other eyeball to eyeball. It was just a healthy exchange and review of our emergency planning and plans.

And I think that the District is better able to cope with major floods than ever before.

Q: At whose initiative did you have this?

A: Well, I guess my initiative for the CPX -- General Smith took the initiative to have exercises for mobilization planning and now General Smith has implemented this flood emergency CPX annually for all Districts in NCD.

Q: Good. What other initiatives did you take?

A: The National Weather Service has a river forecasting section and we had a number of meetings with those people so that when they give forecasts, we would be a verifier and speak the same language and not be at odds. Now anytime there is a press release, we coordinate and we have not had dissension between the Weather Service and the Corps -- a very healthy first step.

The second thing is, I spoke at the Minnesota Emergency Managers meeting in February and we updated them on our capability and what we had done.

Governor Allen I. Olson, from North Dakota, wrote me a letter and said, "I am concerned and I want you to do these things to get ready." We have met with North Dakota, we have prepositioned our sandbags and pumps and we wrote back a letter to Governor Olson saying, "Sir, we are sitting on the edge of our seats. We are ready."

I think probably we have a higher level of consciousness of emergency actions than we ever had before and we have the right people in management, in the executive office, looking at the

emergency problem. It is not buried within the organization. So emergency management and flooding are getting good visibility and that keeps Emergency Management ready to operate.

Q: Ready. I remember during the height of the snow we listened to Prairie Home Companion and Garrison Keillor said he'd go to visit his parents, but he didn't know how to start the pile of snow that his car was in.

A: Well, my driveway -- I have an Oldsmobile -- you could not see the Oldsmobile in the driveway until you got to the end of the driveway and you looked down it. I had about six-foot banks of snow on either side of the drive. But it is all gone now.

Q: Good. Last year you told me about a case of travel fraud, travel voucher fraud. Has there been a continuing or lingering problem of effects of this or is it pretty much wrapped up?

A: Well, I think last year we talked about the impact of my taking vigorous actions to correct the fraud problem within the work force. I would say the travel fraud problem was isolated in a very small group who worked on dredging and not the bulk of the District, so there was no morale impact other than the group that was involved.

We checked and reinvestigated and the fraud problem has come into focus. Through the system of review and corrective actions, we have the total number of cases down to where we are finishing up. We gave out quite a few suspensions. We have collected quite a bit of money back. I hope to have this completely wrapped up by the change of command.

Q: Are you satisfied with how you handled it?

A: Well, I tried to use the federal court system and that was unresponsive and then the U.S. attorney gave me the cases back to handle administratively. Now that we are handling them administratively within the Corps, they are being done much more systematically and there is consistent punishment dealt out for the violations.

I wrote an open letter to the employees explaining our actions. The problem is behind us, but it got a lot of visibility throughout the Corps. It's a very difficult type of problem to handle and I'm afraid the judicial system doesn't consider it as important as a lot of other cases brought before it.

I think probably the greatest lesson learned is don't let it happen and if it does, we have to handle it ourselves.

Q: Your management memo, that you wrote last spring, 30 April 1981, emphasized a flexible and informal management system. Are you satisfied with that characterization?

A: Well, I worked hard at creating a decentralized management style and in using the corporate body. My management style was designed to get our top managers directly involved in the decision-making. If something is new and innovative, you test the bright young minds you have, you war game it, and get the good ideas put together so that any strategies you come up with are well thought out. I think we in St. Paul do that very well and I am very comfortable with how the District runs.

I realize that every District Engineer has a different management style and that each District will have to adjust to the DE's style. My style is spelled out pretty well in memos and letters. A new District Engineer coming in can understand how I ran the District and have the option of continuing the same way or moving from that point.

So I think the corporate body is working well. Obviously I have grown, hopefully, matured. Looking at my management style over three years, I find that it is dictated a little bit by my boss's management style, and by what the administration wants to do in centralization. It is influenced also by the budget and how quickly we have to react to budget cuts and restrictions.

So you don't have unlimited opportunity to run your District and do your management your way, but still you have the freedom of 80 percent of it. The beauty of it, the system, is that they do let you do your thing and they do let you do it your way and I am very appreciative of that fact.

Q: Have you discussed this with your successor?

A: Not management style, per se. Recently I have had devised a management supervisor test that was given to ten supervisors and they rated me in my management style and their supervisors rated them. So we as supervisors are evaluating the corporate body concept.

I recently took a personal profile test to determine what kind of manager I am and I found I fit the "I" category, which means I try to influence people. I fit next in the dominance category, so I kind of dominate people, but to a lesser degree than the influencing.

Many military people maybe would fit higher in the dominance and less in the "I," so I guess my personal traits support the corporate body and decentralization approach. I will discuss my style with my successor to give him a better understanding of where we are management wise in the District.

Q: The next couple of years will be very interesting. You are still continuing with cross training?

A: Yes, cross training is paying great dividends. We have changed attitudes within the District. Before people were skeptical but now all of the managers want cross training because they see advantages in their growth, and the training they get as executives. I think cross training is something that has taken root in St. Paul and will be here for a long time because our civilians will demand it.

We have a group of civilians who are much broader gauged than before, much more capable. As the lack of mobility problem in the Corps worsens, people cannot afford to change from District to Division to OCE for a grade promotion. More and more of the promotions in the District will be from within, and we are going to have to have a better pool of engineer managers to promote from.

So I think this executive development program has a very positive long-term benefit to the Corps and the next three or four District Engineers will see that positive long-term benefit.

Q: You have been holding that pretty much at the branch chief level?

A: No, we have gone down to the section chief level. Each level sees what is going on at the next higher level and they want to buy in.

So the executive development and the cross training are really taking over in St. Paul District.

Q: You just expanded from the branch chiefs then this year, didn't you?

A: Yes, the young people see it, and I have had people come in saying "Hey, I've got to broaden my base." So it is throughout the organization now and it is very pleasing because I think it is healthy and it is something I feel that I started and I feel like a father.

So it is a pleasure to me to see this executive development taking place.

Q: You are making the transition now, out of the job, and you are helping someone make the transition into the job. And you talked about it a little bit this morning. What are the important things you have to say to your successor?

A: Well, the first thing is you have to find out whether he wants a transition. There are some people who don't want an overlap. They say "You walked out. I am a manager. I am a commander. I've been through the systems. I have the experience and I will do it myself."

Other people will say, "Hey, that outgoing DE has a lot of experience and a lot of knowledge and I want to know as much as I can."

So the first thing you have to do is find out if your replacement wants to buy in and how deeply he wants to buy in.

Recently when I talked to Colonel Ed Rapp, I asked, "Am I overkilling you with visits and meetings and so forth?" And Colonel Rapp said, "No, I love it. Keep it coming."

So he's already read the history, the state books, the congressional data for the testifying officer.

We wrote him a letter that spelled out what each staff area did within the District. I had each of my branch and division chiefs put together one paragraph for the new DE and I put an entry paragraph on it and a closing one and mailed it to him.

He is going to go to the International Joint Commission meetings with me. He is going to go around and meet senators and congressmen with me.

He is going to take the contract course and the DE course before he shows up in St. Paul. So I take pleasure in thinking that Colonel

Rapp is going to be a well-informed replacement when he takes over on 7 June.

Q: How does this compare with the transition you made into the job?

A: I was treated well. General Gay was the District Engineer when I took over. I went out and visited. We visited the governors and I suppose much of my transition plan is predicated on what General Gay did for me. General Gay's management style was close to mine in certain areas and I tried to, the first year, not drastically deviate from what he was doing.

I guess one of the advantages in transitions is that most of the old DEs are good folks and most of the new DEs are good people, so that you are not taking over an organization that is down and out.

You are taking over an organization that is functioning and hopefully the transition is smooth. With minor fine tuning, the new DE is off and running.

Transition is hard on the civilian employees. They look at it as, well, another District Engineer that they will have to educate.

Q: Some new idiosyncracies come into the office.

A: That's right, and so they are very eager to see this new person and they look him over very closely and he's slowly met by a number of our civilians and they have formed opinions. So the transition is already underway. The information exchange is already underway. What we want to do is build the confidence and the trust so that when he takes over, he will take over a good District and be off and running.

Q: Who are the essential contacts in the community? What are the contacts the new DE has to make or that ease his job the most?

A: Well, you find that you have got a few, maybe one-third of your congressional delegation, who really enter the Corps net. Some congressmen have other interests and they do social programs or concentrate on their own different committees. So you find one or two or three in each state who have as their thing the Corps and our projects. So those are the key contact elements.

Q: So you can help the new DE identify those.

A: Yes, then you have certain mayors and sponsors of certain projects that are in the right stage of development. That mayor, those sponsors, play key parts. So there are about a half dozen key mayors and sponsors.

Q: What do you mean by sponsors?

A: Well, every project has to have a sponsor. We don't go out and promote Corps projects. There is a locally recognized need for a project and the local sponsor, which could be the county or watershed district or the city, has gone to their congressional representatives, which results in legislative language that says, "Corps, come down and do a study and here is the money." So if you don't have an active sponsor who will sign the letter of agreement and pay local shares, you don't have a project.

First, you have to have a viable sponsor. Second, you have to have state support. If the governor doesn't support the project, you don't have a project.

The third thing you have to have is a benefit-cost ratio greater than one.

So the general rule of thumb or the three things any project needs are: an active sponsor; state support with the governor backing you, and a benefit-cost ratio greater than one.

Other important people would be agency heads, the head of the National Weather Service, and the head of the Soil Conservation Service. Others are the Fish and Wildlife regional heads and area people. Important agencies for me are the Minnesota Pollution

Control Agency, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the Water Commission for the State of North Dakota.

Each state is wired differently. I have wiring diagrams for each state and I will explain how the Corps interfaces in each state. I will take the new DE by and introduce him to the shakers and the movers.

Q: What about environmental groups?

A: They don't seem to be as prominent as they used to be. I think the economy has hurt them inasmuch as I don't think they have the funding they used to have. I don't see as many environmental interests and I don't see as many environmental actions from environmental groups as in the past.

Q: Of course, we don't see as many projects as we used to either.

A: Right. And I think that they have tended to feel that they have helped realign the Corps' thinking. They feel that we are more environmentally sensitive, that we are doing fewer things wrong, and that there are other people doing more and worse things, so they are after them. I feel maybe we have more credibility now with these environmental groups than we had before.

Q: Do you have anything in particular to tell your successor about how to keep relations good with these important people, different groups?

A: Well, obviously you can't allow the technocrats from your organizations to have their petty wars and when that happens you have to quickly meet with their bosses and solve the problem.

You can tell when this is happening by the poison pen letters coming out of your organization. Some people will be venting their emotions. I don't allow poison pen letters. I don't allow emotionalism. The managers have to get together and let the lower levels know that we have got to work together.

I think that you have to be very careful of their areas of responsibility and their turf and be sure that you are not infringing on their areas. There has to be consciousness on their part of what your areas are.

So there has to be communication between organizations. I made a conscious effort of improving the relationships with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Weather Service, and Fish and Wildlife.

I met with the heads of these organizations and we have slowly

gotten rid of the poison pen letters. We talked more. We tried to understand each other's problems. And I think that we have achieved some real-good professional relationships with these other agencies.

And that communication is key to having a healthy program.

Q: The Department of Defense professionals have a tendency to speak in Pentagonese dialect. Does this mode of expression represent a problem for potential DEs?

A: Well, that's interesting. With any new job you have a new vocabulary and I am working on notes for the new District Engineer by expanding my Colonel Art Williams letter. And in those notes, the last three or four pages, are listed acronyms or terms that a civil works District uses that the average Army officer may not be aware of.

Now, I would think that we in civil works, speaking a civil-workese, could be just as bad as the Pentagonese that a military officer may speak. Any new DE should quickly learn the language of the new organization and forget those of the old.

Q: What about the press and the new District Engineer? Are there any important principles to guide relations with the press?

A: Well, I think we have discussed this before. My philosophy is to let a project manager speak openly, in order not to give any appearance of holding information back, and to be as candid as possible. We in St. Paul are very lucky that the press in this area seems to play fair with us.

We are not misquoted and we are not abused by the press. I guess my feeling of skepticism when I took over is now one of optimism.

You just do your job and tell the truth and good press will follow.

Q: What about the new administration in Washington? Are you able to be as open with the press as you were before?

A: I think there is a new caution now because, obviously, if the press misquotes you and the misquote is not supportive of the current administration, I think you will have to answer for it. When you have centralized control and a more conservative approach, the press has to be taken more seriously. The press may view caution as cover-up. But I think that the signals are clear. I understand what the administration policies are so I am able to deal with them even with the press. The relationship with the press has not been the problem I envisioned three years ago.

Q: How do you feel about leaving?

A: Well, you know, I was almost looking at it as the end of my career and going into the twilight zone because I believed there wouldn't be a job that is as good as the one I'm leaving. But the Army and the Corps were very good to me. It looks like the job at West Point will be very challenging.

I will have my own flagpole and my own people and my own budget and there are some new challenges ahead. That has helped soften the blow of leaving the District.

Another thing that has helped soften the leaving is that I feel that I have had a good tour and have been able to do some positive things in moving projects and helping the St. Paul District. I am leaving a good District with a good incoming DE and I know that St. Paul will continue on and will do great things.

Q: Here comes the last question every time, right? What should we have talked about? What didn't I ask you that is important?

A: Mickey, you have a way of doing your homework by going over all your old interviews. I'd say you are pretty thorough.

The Corps has to worry about where it is going in the future, and I

guess that the bottom line has to be this: can we maintain a base of engineering knowledge so that in the event we ever have to mobilize and support our armed forces, we would be a viable organization?

With the budget problems, space cuts, and the long time required to plan a project, all meshed together with local interests being able financially to handle cost-sharing, I am concerned that some Districts may not be able to remain viable entities.

There is a certain element out there that says, "What will be will be, and if they don't have a program, then they should not be viable entities." But I would hate to think that if we ever had to mobilize, that this engineering, planning, and construction organization would not be available to serve the nation.

And we have the civil works projects out there that need to be done for the people, but are not being done and not being funded. Because they are not being done and not being funded, they don't provide the lifeblood of training for the organization that we may need for mobilization.

So there is a very deep concern about the survivability and viability of organizations. The base line, I feel, is that we have got to have new missions and new jobs.

We just picked up \$100,000 to do the master planning at Fort McCoy and Camp Ripley. We just picked up \$10,000 to do installation support books for those two installations.

We are taking a much greater role in mobilization and military programs and are working closer with our District in Omaha. We have to get military programs to each District. We have to get EPA super-fund monies into each District. We have to insure that the budgets of Districts stay healthy to maintain their capabilities so in the future we can meet the challenges.

I am very concerned that we don't lose our engineering hard skills, our management hard skills, and our contracting hard skills and that we stay viable as an organization.

Sounds like I'm running for office, doesn't it?

Q: Sounds good. Thank you very much for four delightful and stimulating interviews. I appreciate it.

A: Thank you, Mickey. I've enjoyed them.